

“Renderings of the Self: The Theme of Fluid Identity in the Work of Jackie Kay”

The submitted BA thesis studies one of the most famous contemporary Scottish women writers, a prominent poet and fiction writer, Jackie Kay from the perspective of two very relevant elements that figure in most of her work: their destabilization of traditional concepts of national identity and of gender. It establishes from the outset a rigorous theoretical framework ranging from categories of Scottish identity to the performativity of gender. Each of these is very logically and comprehensively laid out and worked through in relation to enlightening readings of selected works by Jackie Kay. What emerges is the idea of the authors' subversive potential, challenging social and cultural norms. Identities, both national and gender, are seen as self-invented and, most importantly, fluid and not fixed.

Despite the importance of Kay to such a topic, she has not been much studied in the Czech environment. Therefore, I find the submitted dissertation quite innovative and original. This is not diminished in any way by focus on the early texts of Kay. The choice is relevant and well-substantiated. Moreover, the thesis is noteworthy for its depth and range of critical reading. Organization of text, structure of argumentation (I appreciate the symmetrical balance of individual chapters, which gives the thesis an elegant and well-polished effect), and despite its treating of difficult concepts, overall easy readability, is praiseworthy and demands attention.

The dissertation is immensely inspiring, however for the defence I have just a couple of questions: On page 38, Anežka Stehlíková touches on the issue of accent in *The Adoption Papers* and notices that while differences of language are of utmost relevance to the sense of identity construction (“Highland voice”, “broad Scots” etc.), the adopted daughter ceases to use it so prominently as the poem continues and she gets older. Ms Stehlíková hesitates between several explanations. Can she attempt perhaps a clearer commitment to an interpretation of this phenomenon? I would also appreciate some comparison with other contemporary Scottish (women) writers – is Kay's favourite theme also a big issue for others and does she find some that share Kay's outlook; or, alternately, is it because of her specific personal background that fluid identities are so important for Kay?

Nuanced readings of primary texts, sophisticated application of theory, and a dedicated commitment to the exploration of a difficult area - all these ought to be sufficient grounds to substantiate my suggestion for the grade of excellent (výborně).

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